# Newport Philatelic Society

## Newsletter Spring Fifth Release: Number 64 May 2020

## Introduction:

Dear members, my thanks to all who have submitted articles or stories and because of this I am pleased to present the fifth edition of the interim newsletter. As before I have put all previous issues on our website.

https://newportgwentphilatelic.weebly.com/

In this issue we have my early collecting story and two articles one from Roy on a recent philatelic visit to Lundy and another from Graham giving us some observations on our hobby we can all think about.

**My Trip to Lundy 2020:** (An article from Roy)

As most of you are aware my main collecting interest is Lundy, the Lundy club organise a weekend trip each June comprising of a day on Lundy followed by a meeting the next day in Bideford. Every three years, a mid-week trip of 4 days is organised, and on the 16th March 2020, 33 members went by helicopter from Hartland Point to Lundy on a 7 minute flight over to Lundy.

We took off in glorious sunshine, so as soon as we landed, off I went with camera taking photos, as the weather forecast for the rest of the week looked pretty grim. The next day the weather was terrible with howling gales and rain like you have never seen, so going out around the island was not an option. However, we were kept occupied inside with a stamp auction, a Lundy dealer of many years attended with meeting with his stock and after breakfast each morning he

opened up his stock some of which was very rare early material only purchased by him the week before meeting.

The Lundy Philatelic Service issued several new postcards with special hand stamps only available on four days we were there. The island manager gave us a talk and introduced us to the new Lundy Postmaster who provided us with details on new stamp issues over the next two years.  Lundy only issues stamps on an anniversary of something happening on the island or if they run out of stamps, on average we have a new issue every two years.

Members were invited to bring along displays and each afternoon and evening there were displays of airmails 1930 to 1944, the 1943 Red Cross overprints are one of the rarest issues as they were only available for 3 months then the balance were destroyed, so there was always something of interest to chat about.

Lundy Puffin Definitives were first issued 1982 and still used on mail today, there have been several reprints due to increased postage costs.

Commemorative Issue - Lundy Flora. Issued on 22nd May 1996

Some of the Flora on Lundy is a protected variety and can only be found on Lundy such as the Lundy Cabbage 30 Puffin value above as you can see it looks nothing like a cabbage, but it is a member of the Brassica family.

On the final night of our trip we were informed that Lundy was on lockdown with immediate effect, and all future bookings were cancelled, however our party would be allowed off the island the follow day weather permitting.
The following day it was a bright and sunny day but still a little windy, by 10:00 am the helicopter arrived and started to ferry our party along with all other holiday makers off Lundy. By 2:00 pm the final party left Lundy leaving only Lundy staff on the island.

## Why I started collecting:

My author picture is myself in Edinburgh in front of a Leonardo painting in the National Gallery of Scotland. This picture is called the "Madonna and the Yarnwinder". I set out many years ago to see every Leonardo painting, there are only around 20 in total, and some of these are unfinished, and I had saved this one to last as I reasoned it was one of the "easiest" to visit.

My collecting started when my father gave me his father's, my grandfather's, stamp album. It was a well worn but cared for album which, even then, had countries that did not exist anymore. I used to be fascinated by countries which had changed names, governments and territories. I even discovered, only quite recently, that there is a collecting theme on countries that do not exist anymore. The school had a thriving stamp collectors club so I enjoyed swapping to try to improve the collection. One thing I quickly realised that my collection had many gaps, usually the very rare and very expensive ones, it turns out much later that I discovered my father had used the "good" items to purchase his first motorbike! I do sometimes wonder what was in that original collection. I gradually lost interest in my collection and it was only when a family friend of my mother who worked for Champion Spark Plugs who knew I had collected stamps and asked whether I wanted a box of Polish letters received by the company over many years, that it got a second boost. Poland produced a lot of colourful and excellent thematic stamps especially during the Soviet era and this injection of material and the re-igniting of interest meant that my resulting Polish collection became quite extensive. Poland has suffered over the years by invasion from all directions and the challenge of occupation issues and overprinting proved a real but satisfying challenge. However, there comes a point when cost of filling any gaps becomes prohibitive and I started to consider thematic collecting. After a helpful conversation with John Perry who suggested concentrating on a smaller number of topics(!!) Thankfully with his help and suggestions I found my two main collecting themes. I have always had a fascination with Leonardo da Vinci and I had a few Leonardo stamps which I had already collected at museums and exhibitions that I had visited over the years. When I started, I thought there would be a "few" more Leonardo stamps to find, now many years later I have a bookcase full, and last year, 2019, over fifty countries issued stamps celebrating the 500$^{th}$ anniversary of his death! My other theme relates to my home town of Chepstow, so I have been collecting postal history of the town and surrounding villages for some time with a

particular interest of the various postmarks being used and I have also collected some town ephemera along the way.

A selection of familiar Polish stamps from the 60's, I also like dinosaur stamps but then who doesn't.

**Isolating at Home:** (An article by Graham)

This is not what you may be thinking about if you read this. I told you about my first experience and how I started stamp collecting in my twenties. After I started, I relied mainly on chats with my friend who introduced me to stamp collecting, about philatelic interests and I also began subscribing to two publications, Stamp Collecting and Stamp Magazine. Both carried articles of interest in my areas of collecting becoming in some instance's good references. I continued this way for a few years until I somehow considered joining a Philatelic Society. I joined Cardiff PS and attended not more than a couple of meetings then left due to matters not connected with the society. Family reasons as I became a father and stopped socialising, and pressure of work as I began studying for better qualifications. Another reason was that money became tight raising a family and paying the mortgage! I still collected but in a patchy way sometime putting my stamps away for months or even longer. I resumed my interest years later in a moderate way but when I came up to retirement, I renewed it with some enthusiasm. It lacked something, however, and I think that was the shared interest that I used to have socialising with my friend. I decided on the hop to go again to a meeting of Cardiff PS. Nobody remembered me from the first time, thank goodness, but this time I had no issues that took higher priorities. Two or three months in I was asked to be treasurer! I asked for some time just for the Society to see if they regretted asking me but at the next AGM I was elected. That was the start of a period where I found my most enjoyment in the hobby. After all those years in isolation I had become what I would describe as an introvert stamp collector. I later joined Newport and Barry PS as well probably to catch up all the lost years of Society experience. Joining these Societies encouraged me to start displaying my collecting interests for the first time, even revising my pages and presentations after seeing what other collectors were doing and even dropping some areas I previously collected. I like to think that I specialised a bit more and this was all due to the interaction with members of those Societies. Eventually when travelling became difficult and requiring less involvement in Society matters, I left Barry and Cardiff to establish Newport as my only society.

Why have I written this? It is because Stamp Collectors, or even Philatelists, if we want to sound posh, need to persuade those isolated stamp collectors to join a local society. I say "local" as National Societies do not have the same interaction that regular meetings have. When a new stamp collector attends a meeting for the first time, and if I get an opportunity I try and tell them of my experience and how my enjoyment and knowledge from joining a society

benefited me and to encourage them to keep coming even if that first meeting is not in their interests. Also, the worry that they would be expected to display should be played down. Support is also necessary because I have heard society members (not at Newport I declare) when asking prospective new member what he collects, replied with what I describe as a derogatory answer. Would I have joined a society if my interests were derided?
When you go to a local fair and see unknown collectors making purchases you know that they are potential members as philatelists are pretty much a known bunch of people from visits. I know I am preaching to the converted but something is needed otherwise societies will disappear along with the hobby. Not the "isolating at home" you may have thought when you read the title? Well if nothing is done then stamp collecting well may become that, collecting in "Isolation at Home."

"My Lost Years": *Attending a Fair at I believe the Cardiff Congress some years ago going by the colour of my hair. Chris Noble and Alan Rosser also appear in the image.*

**Final Notes:**

Look after yourselves, keep safe and well. My thanks to all of the contributors who made this issue possible. My challenge to you all is to get creative and send me those articles, tell us how you started or tell us something to share with the other members and we may even get to a sixth edition!
Any mistakes and errors are all down to me so my apologies for them all!

Les Ashton-Smith